

In the Abstract:

Please amend the abstract as follows:

-- A photomask ~~(19)~~ (8) protected against electrostatic damage and a method of manufacturing such a photomask is disclosed. The photomask (8) comprises a transparent substrate (10) on which is deposited an opaque pattern such as lines (12), (14), (16) and (18). A transparent conductive film (30) is deposited over the substrate (10) and pattern such that the various portions of the pattern (lines (12), (14), (16) and (18)) are all maintained at the same electrical potential thereby preventing damage due to an electrostatic discharge.--